1: Hart & Pilling E-5 (1928-1954) 1960
OI20 Tiwi OI20

to marry the boy's sisters, an easily met requirement since girls were "married" so much earlier than their brothers. Very senior and successful men did not bother as a rule with initiation sponsorship because it took too much of their valuable time. Hence in practice, most boys at the *Marukumarni* age were taken in hand by a group of men around 40 years of age who were at least betrothed to, if not already married to, the boys' sisters. Such men justified or rationalized their actions by stating that, as the husbands of the boy's sisters, they wanted their little brother-in-law to be made into a man in proper form. In fact, they were usually given the job by the boy's father, who, having bestowed daughters upon them, regarded it as a legitimate request to make of them. It was the duty of male cross-cousins to initiate their wives' little brothers, but in true Tiwi style the father had to request them to do it, and they counted it in their tallies of what they owed him and what he owed them.

Though the father instigated and stage managed the whole affair, he and his household were always thunderstruck when the cross-cousins—armed to the teeth and painted like a war party—arrived at his camp one evening and proceeded to carry off forcibly the yelling 14-year-old.[6] He had to be dragged literally from the bosom of his family, with his mother screaming and trying to hide him and the father pretending to resist the invaders of his household. From then on, until the final stage (*Mikingula*) at age 24-26, the boy was completely under the authority of the men who carried him off. During these approximately ten to twelve years, he spent much of the time alone with them in the bush where the group lived a monastic existence, as a small band of isolates, speaking to no one (especially not to females) and obtaining their own food. During these phases the tutors guarded the boy as if he were literally a prisoner and taught him all the things—chiefly ritual matters—that grown men should know. At intervals the youth was allowed to go home, on week-end leaves so to speak, but when at home he had to observe all the silences, the modest demeanor, the taboos and the austerities of the isolated life. In monastic language, he was under a strict rule of obedience to his tutors.

Breaking in on the long years of austerity, spent either in seclusion in the bush or in *pukimani* at home, were periodic collective ceremonies when the youth was ritually advanced from one stage of initiation to the next.[7] These were public ceremonies, witnessed by large crowds, and the more important of such transition ceremonies took place in January and February when the *kolema* yams were ripe. At these ceremonies the youths were handled in batches or classes, all the boys of one grade being ritually advanced to the next grade, and the top grade or final class being formally graduated as fully initiated men. The crucial grade—when the pubic hairs were forcibly pulled out and he was at last allowed to talk back a little to his tutors—was usually reached by a youth somewhere between his eighteenth and twentieth years, but

[6] See Hart 1955 for some further details of the tearing away of the boy from the bosom of his family.

[7] A full list of initiation grade names and their duration in years is given in Hart 1931.

13:Barclay J-3 (ca. 1939)1939 O120 Tiwi O120

797 The sisters frequently take their charges into the bush for a day's "walkabout," and all the children go back to their parents at intervals. Thus their education at the mission does not mean that they lose all the bushcraft that is their natural inheritance.

[23] THEY are busy people at the mission. In addition to the
241 fruits already mentioned, lay brothers grow crops of peanuts and sweet potatoes and attend to the pigs, goats, and cattle that form the live-stock of the settlement. They are their own mechanics and electricians, and the tractor used in the farming operations also charges the six-volt battery which, transformed to 360 volts high tension, is employed in radio communication with the mainland. Boats are built in the workshop by the brothers, and a launch, of 26 feet deck measurement, has been completed and very neatly fitted with bunks, cooking shelf for a primus stove, crockery cupboard, and lockers. When fitted with an engine, this launch will replace the old lugger *St. Francis*, so well known in North Australia, and will afford a more rapid and certain passage to the mainland.

As we walked back to the aerodrome, little black boys drove a long string of white goats through the palm-trees, and the "blackies" waved and called "Um-bung-ie!" (good-bye). Major

[p. 19(A)]